

Message Text

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72

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 162251Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1024

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 5819

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PE, CI, MX

SUBJECT: RESIGNATION OF PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR ALFRONSO BENAVIDES

REF: MEXICO 5900

1. THE PERUVIAN GOVERNMENT'S REACTION TO ALFONSO BENAVIDES' RESIGNATION WAS SUMMED UP BY AIR MINISTER ROLANDO GILARDI WHEN HE SAID TO ME LAST FRIDAY "ALFONSO ES UN LOCO." GILARDI ADDED THAT THE DECISION TO INVITE CHILEAN AIR MINISTER AND JUNTA MEMBER GUSTAVO LEIGH WAS MADE BY PRESIDENT VELASCO AND THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND THEREFORE BENAVIDES' OPEN OPPOSITION TO THAT DECISION AUTOMATICALLY SIGNALLED HIS RESIGNATION OR DISMISSAL.

2. ONE EMINENT PERUVIAN HISTORIAN AND FORMER PROFESSOR OF BENAVIDES ASSOCIATED LATTER'S EXTREMIST TENDENCIES AND ERRATIC BEHAVIOR WITH THE FACT (SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED BY OTHERS) THAT BOTH HIS MOTHER AND A SISTER WERE AT ONE TIME COMMITTED TO AN ASYLUM. A MILITARY COMMANDER SERVING IN CUZCO, WHO FORMALLY SERVED AS RIGHT-HAND MAN TO FOREIGN MINISTER DE LA FLOR, DESCRIBED TO ME THE DISTRESS AND ANGER THAT SOME OF BENAVIDES' CABLES CAUSED THE FOREIGN MINISTER IN TIMES PAST.

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HE RECALLED ONE SUCH CABLE WHICH DE LA FLOR FOUND SO INSOLENT

THAT HE RETURNED IT TO BENAVIDES. I ALSO RECALL A CONVERSATION IN MEXICO CITY IN WHICH BENAVIDES AND THEN ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR HECTOR CAMPORA DISCUSSED THE ROLE OF AN AMBASSADOR AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FOREIGN MINISTER. BENAVIDES SAID HE VIEWED HIS ROLE AS A POLITICAL ADVISOR IN THE BROADEST SENSE AND SAID HE FELT AN OBLIGATION TO GIVE HIS GOVERNMENT HIS VIEWS ON DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS AS WELL AS ON RELATIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND PERU. BENAVIDES SAID SOMETHING ABOUT HELPING HIS GOVERNMENT "MAINTAIN IDEOLOGICAL COHERENCE." TO THIS CAMPORA, WHO OBVIOUSLY HOLDS A MORE NARROW VIEW OF THE AMBASSADORIAL ROLE, TOLD BENAVIDES. "TU ERES UN APASIONADO."

3. SINCE COMING TO PERU I HAVE LEARNED THAT BENAVIDES WAS THE PRIME MOVER IN THE LATE '60'S IN THE ATTACKS IN THE PERUVIAN CONGRESS ON IPC AND THAT SINCE THEN HE BECAME TOO HOT (ERRATIC) FOR EVEN THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT OF THE ARMED FORCES TO HANDLE. AS A RESULT, HE WAS SENT INTO "HONORABLE EXILE" AS PERU'S AMBASSADOR TO MEXICO, OBVIOUSLY, BENAVIDES' GOVERNMENTAL CAREER HAS ENDED FOR THE TIME BEING. IT WOULD BE INTERESTING, HOWEVER, TO KNOW WHERE HE GOES FROM MEXICO. NEITHER WE NOR THE GOP HAVE HEARD THE LAST OF HIM.
DEAN

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